

Streamlining UI Information Exchanges

Understanding the Benefits of SIDES & SIDES E-Response

Message and Communications Product Toolkit
February 15, 2012

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Introduction

Streamlining UI Information Exchanges: Message and Communications Product Toolkit is designed to provide state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies with recommendations and resources to introduce employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) to the **State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)** and **SIDES E-Response** systems.

The Toolkit includes suggestions about how state UI agencies might launch an employer outreach and awareness campaign, as well as information and resources that will enable state UI agencies to effectively communicate with employers and TPAs about the offerings and benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response. The nine message products in the Toolkit may be used as provided or customized by the state to ensure consistency with the state's established programs, styles and procedures.

As states share information with employers and TPAs about SIDES and SIDES E-Response, they may also want to include elements of the *UI Claimant and Employer Message Toolkit* that was provided in February 2012 by the Information Technology Support Center. The *UI Claimant and Employer Message Toolkit* is a resource for state unemployment agencies to help improve employer understanding and compliance with established rules, procedures and responsibilities of reporting to the state various components related to UI claims.

State UI agency officials who have questions about SIDES or SIDES E-Response may contact Chris Peretto at 202-744-9182 or cperetto@naswa.org.

Employer Insights

In November 2011, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) SIDES Team invited a cross-section of employers from various industries and geographies to share information about the challenges inherent to responding to UI information requests. The participants discussed the hurdles that employers may face in implementing a new UI information response process and the common concerns and misperceptions about web-based information exchange systems. The participants, who included small, mid-size and large employers, as well as TPAs, expressed enthusiasm about the opportunity to electronically respond to UI information requests, while also raising a series of common themes and issue areas, including:

1. **Cost** – Employers and TPAs are primarily interested in the time and cost savings associated with implementing and using an electronic, web-based information response system.
2. **Efficiency** – Employers and TPAs want to streamline the UI response process by reducing unnecessary paperwork and follow-up phone calls from state UI agencies.
3. **IT Support** – Employers and TPAs choosing to integrate directly with SIDES need access to IT support to develop the necessary interface programming.
4. **Awareness** – States participating in SIDES and SIDES E-Response need to initiate an outreach effort to employers and TPAs to make them aware of the availability and advantages of using SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
5. **Security** – Employers and TPAs need assurance that SIDES and SIDES E-Response include appropriate measures to ensure that sensitive data are exchanged securely.

Perhaps the most important insight is how eager employers, both large and small, are to learn from state agencies how they can begin responding electronically to UI information requests. Based on the feedback, the NASWA SIDES Team developed the Toolkit, including nine communications products, to address these core themes and issues. The communication products, which begin on page 6, may either be used in concert with a state UI agency's existing communications to employers and TPAs or as the foundation for a focused, SIDES and SIDES E-Response communications outreach initiative. Each communication product is accompanied by a brief overview page that provides suggestions on usage and placement.

Considerations for Launching an Employer Outreach Effort

Overview

State UI agencies have a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and understanding among employers and TPAs about the benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response. The following provides proposed approaches for developing new communications tactics or enhancing existing communications efforts, based on the insights gathered from employer groups and recommendations provided by state UI agency officials. As with the communications products in this Toolkit, state UI agencies may use the concepts in this section when creating an employer communication outreach campaign, or they may customize outreach efforts and supporting materials to complement existing communications efforts.

Objectives

The objectives of an employer outreach campaign are to raise awareness and understanding of the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems and persuade employers and TPAs to participate. As state UI agencies develop outreach efforts, they may want to consider how to deliver messages with three primary objectives in mind:

- Engage employers in the effort to streamline and simplify the UI information exchange process by ensuring that communications are similarly streamlined and simple, rather than laden with jargon or complex terminology.
- Communicate to employers how SIDES can save them money by preventing improper payments and keeping UI taxes as low as possible.
- Demonstrate to employers and TPAs the ease-of-use of SIDES and SIDES E-Response as well as the quick access to resources and support from the SIDES Team.
- Build and enhance relationships between state UI agencies and employers by being responsive and clear about the functionality and benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response.

Laying the Groundwork

Prior to beginning an employer outreach campaign, state UI agencies may wish to assess existing communications. An internal “communications audit” of the current methods and messages used to communicate with employers and TPAs may help state UI agencies identify potential opportunities for enhanced communications. Developing a list of common interactions – web communications, telephone, in-person meetings, quarterly newsletters – may provide opportunities for state UI agencies to deliver messages about SIDES and SIDES E-Response. Also, *process-mapping*, the practice of analyzing communications and interactions in a step-by-step method, may reveal new communications opportunities. State UI agencies may want to compile a detailed analysis of how an average employer interacts with the agency to assess ways to enhance those interactions.

Additionally, a close examination of the language used to communicate with employers may reveal opportunities to incorporate new messages. Clear and concise writing will help when communicating with employers and TPAs about how to participate in SIDES or SIDES E-Response, which will be particularly important as large employers assess the processes and investments necessary to integrate IT systems with the SIDES infrastructure.

State UI agencies that undertake a communications audit may want to consider the following questions:

- How does an average employer “find” information from the state UI agency – via telephone directory, web search, social media, third-party groups, etc.? What information will they find through a generic search and is there a way to incorporate messages about SIDES and SIDES E-Response?
- What channels or delivery mechanisms are used to reach employers and TPAs? How regular are these communications, and is there an opportunity to increase (or decrease) the frequency to make them as effective as possible?
- Are answers to frequently asked questions addressed at the forefront of state UI agencies’ communications or must employers “dig” to find common answers? Is there an opportunity to incorporate FAQs about SIDES and SIDES E-Response in existing forums?
- Are the full range of the UI agency’s technical and program support resources easily accessible for employers?

At the conclusion of its internal assessment, a state UI agency should have a solid sense of its communications reach and areas in which it can either incorporate messaging about SIDES and SIDES E-Response or areas in which it can create new channels of communication. The most important consideration when building a communications outreach effort is to remember your audience. Keep in mind that SIDES and SIDES E-Response will be unfamiliar to many employers and TPAs. All outreach tactics and all supporting materials need to be designed to preemptively expand employers’ knowledge, encourage them to access additional information, and dispel any misunderstandings or confusion.

Suggested Approaches

Once a state UI agency completes its communications assessment, it will be better prepared to begin engaging with employers and TPAs about its services and resources. The most impactful method to educate employers and TPAs is through in-person interactions that will allow state UI agency representatives to share information about unemployment insurance claims rules and procedures, as well as provide information about the benefits of using SIDES or SIDES E-Response.

As state UI agencies prepare for face-to-face interactions with local employers and TPAs, they may want to consider the following:

- Identify business groups, such as State and local chapters of the chamber of commerce, manufacturing organizations, state chapters of the National Federation of Independent Business and local chapters of the Society for Human Resources Management, and seek opportunities to engage with their membership.
- Identify employers and TPAs within the state that are most likely to use SIDES.
 - Proactively contact the person who is authorized to make decisions about SIDES participation and arrange for a demonstration.

As state UI agencies assess ways to most effectively reach out to employers and TPAs, they may choose to incorporate communications products in the Toolkit to strengthen or augment their outreach efforts. Among the communications products included in the Toolkit are fact sheets, web text, frequently asked questions, a third-party commentary and a PowerPoint presentation. States may choose to create additional employer outreach tactics using the communications products in this Toolkit, such as the following:

- **Employer Testimonials** – Enlist employer “ambassadors” that can speak to the benefits of SIDES or SIDES E-Response. Create a forum, either electronically, in print or through an in-person seminar, in which the ambassadors share their experiences using SIDES or SIDES E-Response.
- **Milestone Dates** – Develop an editorial calendar highlighting key employer dates, such as when tax notices are distributed, and identify opportunities to supplement already-scheduled communications with information about SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
- **Brochures, Posters or Other Materials** – Using the messages in the Toolkit, develop additional materials, such as brochures or information packets, which may be used as “leave-behinds” when meeting with employers or speaking at industry events.
- **Industry Sectors or Employers** – Assess those industries and employers within the state that may face workforce reductions or facility closures. Reach out to those employers with information about SIDES and SIDES E-Response so that they prepare to handle an increased volume of UI benefits claims.
- **Third-party Advocates and Validators** – Identify key employer groups within the state to serve as “champions.” State and local chapters of the chamber of commerce, manufacturing organizations, state chapters of the National Federation of Independent Business and local chapters of the Society for Human Resources Management, among others, are well-positioned to help state UI agencies contact employers through monthly meetings, newsletters, industry panels and speakers’ forums.
- **Website** – The state agency website is a key place where employers seek information about the UI information exchange process. Leverage the state agency’s website to increase awareness and drive employers to participate in SIDES and SIDES E-Response. Detailed suggestions, guidelines and sample web text are provided on page 22.
- **Social Media** – Social media is an efficient way to disseminate content, maximize impact and communicate to a multitude of audiences. Depending on a state UI agency’s existing social media practices and procedures, resources such as Facebook and Twitter may be used to drive employers and TPAs to the state agency website for more information. Social media content may also be used to answer employers’ questions, interact with employers in real time, and distribute notices about important updates.

In addition, states may want to consider ways to incorporate communications products in the Toolkit to strengthen or augment existing communications efforts, such as:

- Using communications products to communicate with employers across multiple platforms;
- Adjusting communications products to include state-specific processes and responsibilities;
- Incorporating messages about SIDES and SIDES E-Response into current communications to eliminate a “boilerplate” feel; and
- Identifying a single point of contact within the state UI agency who is familiar with the communications messages and who is able to help employers navigate SIDES or SIDES E-Response.

Product #1: SIDES and SIDES E-Response Fact Sheet

Purpose

- Provide state UI agencies with a concise summary of the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems.
- Provide employers and TPAs with facts about the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems.
- Appeal to the business and economic motivations of employers and TPAs to implement SIDES or SIDES E-Response.
- Direct employers and TPAs to information and resources available through the state UI agency.

Proposed Usage

- Distribute during interactions between state UI agencies and employers, TPAs and business groups.

Proposed Placement

- Send with regular mailings to employers and TPAs.
- Post on state UI agency websites as a PDF for print-on-demand.
- Incorporate into brochures, posters and other materials developed by the state UI agency.
- Use as a handout when briefing business groups about SIDES and SIDES E-Response.



SIDES and SIDES E-Response Fact Sheet

The Problem

Responding to paper-based unemployment insurance (UI) information requests fully and within tight deadlines creates a significant and costly administrative burden on companies today, putting a strain on the bottom line. This problem is compounded for employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) with operations in multiple states, since – until recently – no single national standard existed to help states and employers easily and electronically exchange key information about UI claims.

The Solution

Developed through a strategic partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and state UI agencies, the **State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)** and **SIDES E-Response** offer employers and TPAs – *free of charge* – a secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format in which they can easily respond to UI information requests, attach documentation when needed and receive a date-stamped confirmation of receipt. Now, employers and TPAs in states implementing the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems can adopt an electronic standardized format to better anticipate and supply the data needed for UI information requests, reduce follow-up phone calls and streamline their UI response processes, reducing paper work while saving time and money.

The Options

For employers with a limited number of UI claims throughout the year, the **SIDES E-Response** website provides an easy and efficient portal for electronically posting responses to information requests from state agencies. SIDES E-Response is available in participating states to any employer or TPA with internet access.

SIDES E-Response

UI SIDES
State Information Data Exchange System

* indicates a Required Field

**Separation Information Application
Response Entry**

To respond to your separation information request(s), please login using the instructions provided by the State Agency.

[Users Guide](#)

* State: ?

* Federal Employer Identification Number: ?

* State Employer Identification Number: ?

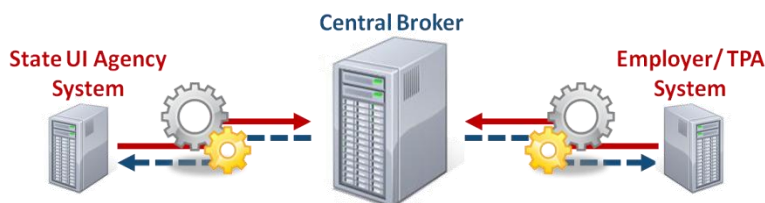
* Identification Number/Access Code: ?

Note: Dashes and/or other punctuation should be omitted from the Federal/State Employer Identification Numbers.

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SIDES provides a more automated data-sharing and file-tracking interface between employers' IT systems and state agency networks. SIDES is an integrated computer-to-computer interface designed for employers and TPAs that typically deal with a large volume of UI information requests. SIDES is especially helpful to those that operate in multiple states.

SIDES UI Information Flow Process



Both options are completely *free of charge* for employers and TPAs, although there will be internal IT system development costs to integrate SIDES. In addition, both options have multiple layers of security that are implemented to the highest standard, given the sensitive data exchanged between state UI agencies and employers and TPAs.

The Benefits

As of September 30, 2012, 42 states will be using SIDES and SIDES E-Response. Both systems offer an impressive array of benefits and have the potential to significantly improve the UI information exchange process. SIDES and SIDES E-Response give employers and TPAs an electronic way to simplify and streamline responses to UI information requests, saving time and money by:

- eliminating delays related to paper mail delivery, and allowing more time to gather information and respond;
- ensuring more complete information is provided through standard edits, validations and business rules, reducing time-consuming follow up phone calls;
- reducing paper handling, staff time and postage costs; and
- keeping UI tax rates lower by reducing improper payments.

In addition to the significant administrative cost savings offered by SIDES and SIDES E-Response, both options address two of the largest causes of UI overpayments: incorrect initial eligibility decisions (job separation issues) and working while receiving UI benefits.

Many UI overpayments, which could be prevented by receiving timely and accurate information, negatively impact employers' bottom lines. In fiscal year 2011, the UI system paid \$117 billion in federal and state UI benefits to 18.7 million beneficiaries. The USDOL estimates that 12 percent of these benefits were paid improperly.

With this in mind, using SIDES or SIDES E-Response will help employers keep UI rates as low as possible by providing accurate, quality and timely information to state UI agencies.

Additional information is available at <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response

- ✓ Saves time and money
- ✓ Provided for FREE
- ✓ Reduces staff time
- ✓ Reduces paper work
- ✓ Helps keep UI rates as low as possible by reducing overpayments
- ✓ Provides an electronic, nationally standardized data format
- ✓ Includes data checks to ensure the exchange of complete and valid information
- ✓ Provides tools for a healthier bottom line
- ✓ Reduces follow up requests and phone calls

Product #2: SIDES Fact Sheet

Purpose

- Provide state UI agencies with a concise summary of SIDES that they may provide to employers and TPAs that have a high volume of UI claims.
- Provide employers and TPAs with information about the benefits and IT requirements of SIDES.
- Appeal to the business and economic motivations of employers and TPAs to implement SIDES.
- Direct employers and TPAs to information and resources available through the state UI agency.

Proposed Usage

- Distribute to employers and TPAs that are interested in learning about SIDES.

Proposed Placement

- Send with regular mailings to employers and TPAs with high UI claims.
- Post on state UI agency websites as a PDF for print-on-demand.



SIDES

Fact Sheet

Developed through a strategic partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies, SIDES is an integrated computer-to-computer interface designed for employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) that typically deal with a large volume of UI information requests. SIDES is especially helpful to those employers and TPAs that operate in multiple states.

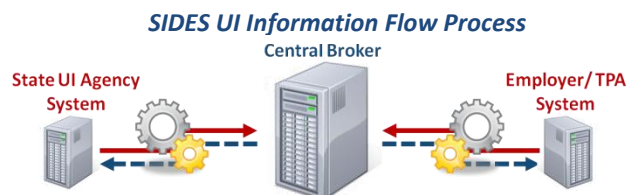
SIDES provides a nationally-standardized format in which employers and TPAs can receive and easily respond to UI information requests, attach documentation when needed and receive a date-stamped confirmation of receipt. Employers and TPAs that use SIDES are able to better anticipate and supply the data needed for UI information requests. In return, using SIDES reduces follow-up phone calls, helps prevent payments to those who don't meet eligibility requirements, eliminates unnecessary appeals, and streamlines UI response processes, which reduces paper work while saving time and money. Given the sensitive data exchanged between state UI agencies and employers and TPAs, SIDES has multiple layers of security that require authentication certificates and encrypted records and files.

SIDES is available *free of charge*, although there will be internal IT system development costs to integrate with SIDES.

How It Works	<p>SIDES is an automated computer-to-computer interface for employers and TPAs to receive and respond electronically to UI information requests.</p> <p>UI information requests from participating states are in the same standard format, and responses from employers and TPAs are in a standard format.</p> <p>Business rules, edit checks and data validations of both requests and responses ensure that complete and properly-formatted information is exchanged.</p> <p>SIDES produces performance metrics and provides audit controls.</p>
	<p>Employers and TPAs need to develop software to connect their internal IT systems to the SIDES Central Broker which routes requests and responses to the appropriate recipient.</p> <p>SIDES was developed using the World Wide Web open design and following industry standards. However, each employer and/or TPA system is unique, and integrating SIDES will entail changes to current IT systems and processes. The SIDES team provides written technical implementation guidance and in-person training for developing the SIDES connection. Detailed technical information is available at http://info.uisides.org.</p>
	<p>SIDES is best suited for employers and TPAs that typically deal with a large volume of UI information requests. While SIDES requires more up-front integration resources, it has the potential to streamline the UI response process, reducing paper work while saving time and money.</p> <p>Employers and TPAs that implement a direct interface with SIDES may wish to use the SIDES E-Response website in the interim while they complete interface programming.</p>

Using SIDES

Once fully integrated, SIDES allows for a secure electronic information exchange between employers and TPAs and a state UI agency. SIDES uses business rules, edit checks and validations that will reduce follow up calls and paper work, saving both the employer and the state valuable time and effort. The SIDES team provides written implementation and developers' guides, model software for connecting to the Central Broker and in-person training to integrate SIDES.



Resources and Support

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) provides support and guidance to employers and TPAs interested in SIDES. Several times a year, NASWA offers in-person SIDES training in Washington, D.C. In addition, NASWA provides resources, such as the Concept of Operations and Implementation Guide, Developers' Guide and model software for connecting to the Central Broker. Technical staff is also available to answer questions during the integration development process. Additional information is available at <http://info.uisides.org>

In Their Own Words

ADP's Unemployment Compensation Services was the first TPA to partner with multiple states and implement SIDES in February 2010. Here's what they have to say about using SIDES:

"The process is much more efficient using a standard set of questions for every state and every unemployment claim. Because the information is sent in a secure, electronic fashion, it ensures the protection of sensitive employer and claimant data. In addition, receiving the request for information on day one rather than waiting for it to arrive in the mail provides additional time for TPAs to gather the appropriate separation details." – ADP, Inc.

Product #3: SIDES E-Response Fact Sheet

Purpose

- Provide state UI agencies with a concise description of SIDES E-Response.
- Provide employers and TPAs with information about SIDES E-Response and its benefits.
- Appeal to the business and economic motivations of employers and TPAs.
- Direct employers and TPAs to information and resources available through the state UI agency.

Proposed Usage

- Distribute to employers and TPAs that are interested in learning about SIDES E-Response.

Proposed Placement

- Send with regular mailings to employers and TPAs.
- Post on state UI agency websites as a PDF for print-on-demand.



SIDES E-Response Fact Sheet

Developed through a strategic partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies, the SIDES E-Response website is accessible *free of charge* to any employer or third-party administrator (TPA) with internet access. SIDES E-Response provides a nationally-standardized format, in which employers and TPAs can easily respond to UI information requests, attach documentation when needed and receive a date-stamped confirmation of receipt. Employers and TPAs that use SIDES E-Response are able to better anticipate and supply the data needed for UI information requests and in return, prevent improper payments, reduce follow-up phone calls and paper work, and streamline UI response processes ultimately saving time and money. Given the sensitive data exchanged between state UI agencies and employers and TPAs, SIDES has multiple layers of security and uses secure communication protocols.

How It Works	<p>SIDES E-Response is a free website through which employers and TPAs may submit electronic responses to UI information requests.</p> <p>Employers and TPAs participating in SIDES E-Response will receive a request for UI information from the participating state UI agency by mail or secure email. The request will include an authorization code that permits the employer or TPA to log on to SIDES E-Response and enter the requested information in a standard format.</p>
What It Requires	<p>SIDES E-Response only requires a working internet connection and an employee who will enter the requested UI information. There is no cost to use SIDES E-Response.</p>
Best Suited For	<p>SIDES E-Response is ideal for employers and TPAs with a limited number of UI claims. No programming is required.</p>

Using SIDES E-Response

SIDES E-Response is a website through which employers and TPAs can submit electronic responses to UI information requests. Because information needs to be entered manually, SIDES E-Response is designed for employers and TPAs that receive a limited number of UI information requests.

SIDES E-Response uses business rules, edit checks and validations to reduce follow-up calls and paper work, saving both the employer and the state valuable time and effort.

Additional information is available at <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [\[insert state contact information\]](#).

Product #4: SIDES and SIDES E-Response Comparison Table

Purpose

- Provide state UI agencies with a side-by-side comparison of the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems.
- Provide employers and TPAs with comparison information about the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems.

Proposed Usage

- Distribute to employers and TPAs that are interested in learning about SIDES and SIDES E-Response.

Proposed Placement

- Send with fact sheets as part of regular mailings to employers and TPAs.
- Post under the SIDES and SIDES E-Response tab on state UI agency websites



SIDES and SIDES E-Response Comparison Table

SIDES and SIDES E-Response have the potential to significantly improve the unemployment insurance (UI) information exchange process. While the best option depends on the specific needs of an employer, both options offer an impressive array of benefits.

Benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response

- ✓ Saves time and money
- ✓ Available for FREE
- ✓ Reduces staff time
- ✓ Reduces paper work
- ✓ Helps keep UI rates as low as possible by reducing overpayments
- ✓ Provides an electronic, nationally standardized data format
- ✓ Includes data checks to ensure the exchange of complete and valid information
- ✓ Provides tools for a healthier bottom line
- ✓ Reduces follow up requests and phone calls

	SIDES E-Response	SIDES
How it Works	<p>SIDES E-Response is a free website through which employers and third party administrators (TPAs) may submit electronic responses to UI information requests.</p> <p>Employers and TPAs participating in SIDES E-Response will receive a request for UI information from the participating state UI agency by mail or secure email. The request will include an authorization code that permits the employer or TPA to log on to SIDES E-Response and enter the requested information in a standard format.</p>	<p>SIDES is an automated computer-to-computer interface for employers and TPAs to receive and respond electronically to UI information requests.</p> <p>UI information requests from participating states are in the same standard format, and responses from employers and TPAs are in a standard format.</p> <p>SIDES produces performance metrics and provides audit controls.</p>
What it Requires	<p>SIDES E-Response only requires a working internet connection and an employee who will enter the requested UI information.</p> <p>No programming is required to implement SIDES E-Response, and there is no charge for its use.</p>	<p>Employers and TPAs need to integrate SIDES with their internal IT systems themselves, but technical support is available.</p> <p>There are no other costs for using SIDES.</p>
Best Suited For	<p>SIDES E-Response is ideal for employers and TPAs with a limited number of annual UI claims.</p>	<p>SIDES is best suited for employers and TPAs that typically handle a large volume of UI information requests. While SIDES requires more up-front integration resources, it has the potential to streamline the UI response process, reducing paper work while saving time and money.</p>

Product #5: Frequently Asked Questions

Purpose

- Provide facts about SIDES and SIDES E-Response and detail the benefits of using a web-based system to exchange information with state UI agencies.
 - States may customize Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) with state-specific information.
- Provide facts about SIDES and SIDES E-Response in a simple, conversational approach that makes difficult messaging easier to understand.

Proposed Usage

- FAQs may be used either in-entirety (all 16 questions) or in-part (as individual questions).
- Send with the fact sheets to help explain SIDES and SIDES E-Response.

Proposed Placement

- Post under the SIDES and SIDES E-Response tab on state UI agency websites. Questions may be posted as margin-notes or call-out boxes to draw attention.
- FAQs may be used as a resource document on a state UI agency's Facebook page or Twitter account.



SIDES and SIDES E-Response Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Developed through a strategic partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies, the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) and SIDES E-Response offer employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) – *free of charge* – a secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format to better anticipate and supply the data needed for responding to UI information requests, reduce follow-up phone calls and streamline UI response processes.

2. What are the differences between SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES E-Response is a website that provides an easy and efficient way to respond to UI information requests from state UI agencies. SIDES is a more automated data-exchange interface between employers' IT systems and SIDES. It is designed for employers and TPAs that typically deal with a large volume of UI information requests and is especially helpful to those employers and TPAs that operate in multiple states.

3. Who can use SIDES or SIDES E-Response?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response are available *free of charge* to every employer and TPA in any state implementing the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems. As of September 30, 2012, 42 states will be using SIDES and SIDES E-Response. To find out if your state is participating, please visit <http://info.uisides.org>

4. What kind of information is exchanged through SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Currently, UI information related to job separation is exchanged through SIDES and SIDES E-Response. Other exchanges, including earnings verification and monetary and potential charges will be available soon.

5. What are the benefits of using SIDES or SIDES E-Response?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response give employers and TPAs an electronic way to simplify and streamline responses to UI information requests, saving time and money by:

- Eliminating delays related to paper mail delivery and allowing more time to gather information and respond timely.
- Ensuring more complete information is provided through standard edits, validations and business rules, reducing time-consuming follow up phone calls.
- Reducing paper handling, staff time and postage costs.

As a result, improper payments are prevented, and UI tax rates are kept as low as possible.

6. Who developed SIDES and SIDES E-Response and why?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response were developed through a strategic partnership between the USDOL and state UI agencies to improve the UI information exchange process, reduce instances of improper UI payments and save employers and TPAs time and money.

7. Who administers SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response are administered by participating state UI agencies.

8. What are the requirements to use SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES E-Response requires only a working internet connection and an employee who will enter the needed information. SIDES requires programming to connect an employer's or TPA's internal IT system to the SIDES central broker.

9. How much does it cost to integrate an employer's or TPA's IT system with SIDES?

Employers and TPAs will need to assess the cost of integrating their IT system with SIDES. The cost will depend on an employer's or TPA's existing system design. SIDES was developed using World Wide Web open design and follows industry standards.

10. How much does it cost to use SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Both systems are offered *free of charge* to employers and TPAs, although there will be internal IT system development costs to integrate SIDES.

11. How secure are SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Both SIDES and SIDES E-Response have multiple layers of security. SIDES E-Response uses secure communication protocols, and SIDES requires authentication certificates and uses encrypted records and files. The highest standard of security is important given the sensitive data exchanged between state UI agencies and employers and TPAs.

12. Which states have adopted SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

As of September 30, 2012, 42 states will be using SIDES and SIDES E-Response. To find out if your state is participating, please visit <http://info.uisides.org>.

13. What UI system was in place before SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

Before SIDES and SIDES E-Response, state UI agencies requested information from employers and TPAs via a slow, manual, paper-based mail process.

14. What are the main causes of UI overpayments?

The two largest causes of UI overpayments are incorrect initial eligibility decisions (job separation issues) and working while receiving UI benefits. Many UI overpayments, which could be prevented by receiving timely and accurate information, negatively impact employers' bottom lines. In fiscal year 2011, the UI system paid \$117 billion in federal and state UI benefits to 18.7 million beneficiaries. The USDOL estimates that 12 percent of these benefits were paid improperly.

15. Are SIDES and SIDES E-Response expected to reduce UI overpayments?

Yes. Both options have the potential to reduce UI overpayments while improving the UI information exchange process.

16. How does an employer or TPA determine which option is best suited for its business?

SIDES E-Response is best suited for employers or TPAs with a limited number of annual UI claims. It requires only a working internet connection and an employee who will enter the needed information. SIDES is best suited for larger employers facing many potential UI claims throughout the year. It provides a more automated data exchange interface between employers' and TPAs' IT systems and state agency networks.

Additional information is available at <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Product #6: State UI Agency Newsletter Content

Purpose

- Provide state UI agencies with a newsletter article that may be used to communicate with employers and TPAs about how they can save time and money using the SIDES or SIDES E-Response systems.
- Direct employers and TPAs to available resources within state UI agencies related to SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
- Engage employers and encourage them to learn more about the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems.

Proposed Usage

- The newsletter content may be used as a tool to reach employers, TPAs and business groups, such as Chambers of Commerce, whose members are comprised of large and small employers.

Proposed Placement

- Include in the state UI agency's existing newsletter, either in print or electronically.
- Incorporate into press releases and by-lined commentaries in local media outlets.
- Modify content for use in newsletters from business organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce and other employer groups.
- Post under the SIDES and SIDES E-Response tab on state UI websites.



Interested in Streamlining UI Information Exchanges?

Learn How by Using an Electronic Standardized System that will Save Time and Money

Employers are all too familiar with the challenges associated with responding to paper-based unemployment insurance (UI) information requests. Ensuring that responses are complete, accurate and submitted within tight deadlines is a significant and costly administrative burden that puts a strain on a company's bottom line. The problem is only compounded when companies operate in multiple states, since – until recently – no single national standard existed to easily and electronically exchange key information about UI claims.

Today, there is a solution to help businesses efficiently and accurately respond to UI information requests.

Developed through a strategic partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and state unemployment insurance agencies, the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) and SIDES E-Response offer employers – *free of charge* – a secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format to better anticipate and supply the data needed to respond to UI information requests, reduce follow-up phone calls and streamline UI response processes.

Both systems are designed to meet the unique needs of businesses large and small. For employers with a limited number of UI claims, the SIDES E-Response website provides an easy and efficient way to respond to information requests from state UI agencies. For employers and third party administrators (TPAs) that handle a large volume of UI information requests, SIDES provides an automated, computer-to-computer interface between employers' and TPA's IT systems and state agency networks.

SIDES and SIDES E-Response offer many benefits that will help your company simplify and streamline responses to UI information requests:

1. **Free of charge.** Both systems are offered *free of charge* to employers and TPAs, although there will be internal IT system development costs to integrate SIDES.
2. **Secure.** Both systems have multiple layers of security that are implemented to the highest standard to protect the sensitive data exchanged between the state UI agency and employers and TPAs.
3. **Ensure accurate information exchanges.** Both systems ensure that complete information is provided through standard edits, validations and business rules.
4. **Reduce administrative costs.** Both systems reduce the volume of time-consuming follow-up phone calls, unnecessary appeals, postage costs, paper work and staff resources.
5. **Save time.** Both systems are electronic, eliminating delays related to paper mail delivery, reducing paper handling, and ensuring information requests are fully completed.
6. **Minimize UI rates.** Both systems will help employers and TPAs keep UI rates as low as possible by providing accurate, quality and timely information to the state UI agency, preventing payments to former workers who don't meet eligibility requirements.

7. **Address two of the largest causes of UI overpayments: incorrect initial eligibility decisions (job separation issues) and working while receiving UI benefits.** Both systems ensure employers and the state UI agency exchange timely and accurate information, reducing UI overpayments, which negatively impact employers' bottom lines.

In fiscal year 2011, the UI system paid \$117 billion in federal and state UI benefits to 18.7 million beneficiaries. The USDOL estimates that 12 percent of these benefits were paid improperly – a fact that created an unnecessary financial and administrative burden on employers and state UI agencies. SIDES and SIDES E-Response have the potential to significantly reduce these improper payments, improve the UI information exchange process, and save your company time and money.

To learn more about SIDES and SIDES E-Response and assess which system is best for your company, visit <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Product #7: Web Text

Purpose

- Provide employers and TPAs with easy access to information and resources related to SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
- Direct employers and TPAs to available resources within state UI agencies related to SIDES and SIDES E-Response.

Proposed Usage

- Website content is designed to be “one-stop shopping” for employers and TPAs to gather all available information and resources about SIDES and SIDES E-Response. The intent is to provide easy access to information, thereby minimizing the amount of time that state UI agency officials need to spend on the phone explaining SIDES or SIDES E-Response to employers and TPAs.

Proposed Placement

- Key information about SIDES and SIDES E-Response should be strategically placed on the state UI agency website for easy access and use.
 - States may want to consider the following “best practices” to direct employers and TPAs to information about SIDES and SIDES E-Response:
 1. Place links to SIDES and SIDES E-Response FAQs and fact sheets prominently on the site and in multiple locations, including the home page.
 2. Clearly define the resources available to assist employers and TPAs with implementing SIDES or SIDES E-Response, including representatives that are available to answer questions.
 - For instance, in the event of confusion about how to implement SIDES or SIDES E-Response, it will be helpful to provide resources and contacts.
 3. Simplify language wherever possible to lead employers and TPAs directly to information about SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
 4. Use graphics from the fact sheets and Comparison Table to highlight the differences and benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
 - For instance, if a visitor clicks on a link to “Learn More about SIDES and SIDES E-Response,” a pop-up window could appear with informational graphics or charts, such as “Benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response.” Or, if an employer is assessing which system is best for their company, they might click on a link, “SIDES or SIDES E-Response: Which Option is Right for You,” where the Comparison Table or graphics from the fact sheets pop up to show the benefits or information exchange flow through each option.

State Website Text

Employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) are all too familiar with the challenges associated with responding to paper-based unemployment insurance (UI) information requests. The **State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)** and **SIDES E-Response** are designed to make it easier and more efficient for employers and TPAs to respond to UI information requests.

What are SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response are web-based systems available to employers and TPAs – *free of charge* – that provide a secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format to respond to UI information requests. SIDES is designed for employers and TPAs that typically deal with a large volume of UI information requests, while SIDES E-Response is for employers with a limited number of UI claims throughout the year.

What are the benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response?

SIDES and SIDES E-Response have the potential to significantly improve the UI information exchange process. While the best option depends on the specific needs of an employer, both systems offer significant benefits:

- ✓ Saves time and money
- ✓ Available for FREE
- ✓ Reduces staff time
- ✓ Reduces paper work
- ✓ Helps keep UI rates as low as possible by reducing overpayments
- ✓ Provides an electronic, nationally standardized data format
- ✓ Includes data checks to ensure the exchange of complete and valid information
- ✓ Provides tools for a healthier bottom line

We invite you to read more about **SIDES** [\[link to SIDES fact sheet\]](#) and **SIDES E-Response** [\[link to SIDES E-Response fact sheet\]](#), and learn how both systems can help your company reduce paper work while saving time and money.

Additional information is available at <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [\[insert state contact information\]](#).

Product #8: Social Media Text

Purpose

- Provide employers and TPAs with easy access to information and resources related to SIDES and SIDES E-Response.
- Direct employers and TPAs to available resources within state UI agencies related to SIDES and SIDES E-Response.

Proposed Usage

- Provide easy access to information, thereby minimizing the amount of time that state UI agency officials need to spend on the phone explaining SIDES or SIDES E-Response to employers and TPAs.

Proposed Placement

- Post on an employer or TPA's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Social Media Text

Sample Facebook Status Update #1

Do you know? Two web-based systems, SIDES and SIDES E-Response, are available to employers and TPAs – *free of charge* – to provide a secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format to respond to UI information requests. To learn more about SIDES and SIDES E-Response and assess which system is best for your company, visit <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Sample Facebook Status Update #2

There's a solution to help employers efficiently and accurately respond to UI information requests. The State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) and SIDES E-Response offer employers – *free of charge* – a secure, electronic and nationally-standardized format to better anticipate and supply the data needed to respond to UI information requests. The two systems help employers by:

1. Eliminating delays related to paper mail delivery, allowing more time to gather information and respond timely.
2. Ensuring more complete information is provided through standard edits, validations and business rules, reducing time-consuming follow up phone calls.
3. Reducing paper handling, staff time and postage costs.
4. Keeping UI rates as low as possible by reducing overpayments.

To learn more about SIDES and SIDES E-Response and assess which system is best for your company, visit <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Sample Facebook Status Update #3

Remember: The two largest causes of UI overpayments are incorrect initial eligibility decisions (job separation issues) and working while receiving UI benefits. Many UI overpayments, which could be prevented by receiving timely and accurate information, negatively impact employers' bottom lines. SIDES and SIDES E-Response have the potential to reduce UI overpayments while improving the UI information exchange process. To learn more about SIDES and SIDES E-Response and assess which system is best for your company, visit <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Sample Tweet #1

Employers: Interested in protecting your bottom line? Improve your UI information exchange process by participating in SIDES or SIDES E-Response. To learn more about SIDES and SIDES E-Response and assess which system is best for your company, visit <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Sample Tweet #2

Did you know? In fiscal year 2011, the UI system paid \$117 billion in federal and state UI benefits to 18.7 million beneficiaries. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that 12 percent of these benefits were paid improperly. Employers can reduce UI overpayments through SIDES and SIDES E-Response. To learn more about SIDES and SIDES E-Response and assess which system is best for your company, visit <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Sample Tweet #3

How can employers help minimize UI overpayments and fraud? Learn how at <http://info.uisides.org> or contact [insert state contact information].

Product #9: SIDES and SIDES E-Response Presentation

Editor's Note: The SIDES and SIDES E-Response Power Point Presentation is provided as a separate document, but screen shots of the presentation are provided below. Please note that talking points are provided in the "Notes" section of each slide of the presentation.

Purpose

- Provide state UI agencies with a customizable presentation about the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems that they may use in meetings with business associations or other groups of employer representatives.
- Provide employers and TPAs with the opportunity to hear from state UI agency officials about the SIDES and SIDES E-Response systems.

Proposed Usage

- The presentation may be used by state UI agency officials to introduce and educate employers and TPAs about SIDES and SIDES E-Response.

Proposed Placement

- In-person meetings between state UI agency officials and employers and TPAs.
- Presentations and speakers' forums with employers.
- Webinars hosted by the state UI agency for interested employers and TPAs.

Streamlining UI Information Exchanges

Understanding the Benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response

[Date]

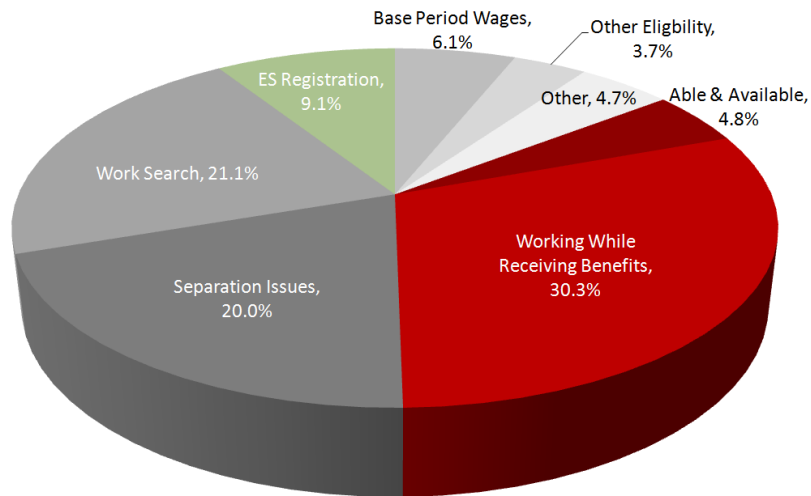


UI Information Exchanges: Today's Landscape

- Information exchanges between state UI agencies and employers are a slow, manual, paper-based mail process
- Each state has its own forms to request and exchange UI information
- Reliance on postal mail creates time pressures on states and employers
- Lack of complete and timely information results in millions of dollars in improper payments
 - In fiscal year 2011, the UI system paid \$117 billion in federal and state UI benefits to 18.7 million beneficiaries. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that 12 percent of these benefits were paid improperly.



FY 2011 Causes of UI Overpayments



UI SIDES
State Information
Data Exchange System

SIDES
E-Response

A Solution: SIDES & SIDES E-Response

- State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) and SIDES E-Response are two web-based options developed through a partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and state UI agencies to simplify and streamline responses to UI information requests
- Both SIDES and SIDES E-Response use a nationally standardized, electronic formats to process UI information exchanges

UI SIDES
State Information
Data Exchange System

SIDES
E-Response

Why Use SIDES or SIDES E-Response?

- Streamlines information exchanges by:
 - Using electronic, nationally-standardized formats
 - Providing more time to gather information and make decisions
 - Providing a single point of contact
- Helps employers by:
 - Ensuring information exchanges are complete and timely
 - Reducing improper payments and unnecessary employer charges
 - Reducing follow up phone calls, paper handling, and postage costs

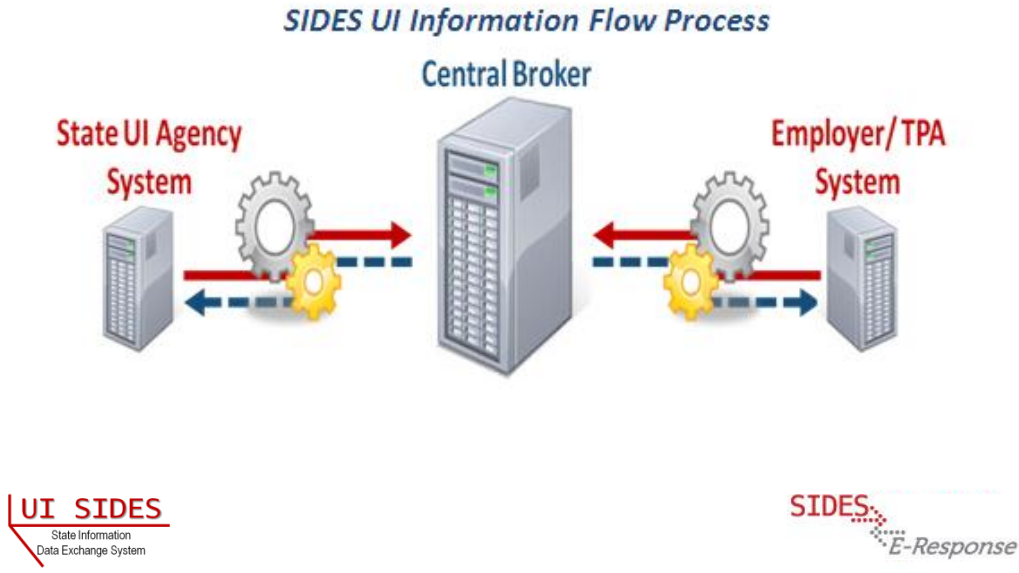


The Facts About SIDES

How It Works	<p>SIDES is an automated computer-to-computer interface to respond electronically to UI information requests.</p> <p>UI information requests and responses are in nationally-standardized formats.</p> <p>SIDES produces performance metrics and provides audit controls.</p>
What It Requires	<p>Employers and TPAs will be required to integrate SIDES into their internal IT system which will entail changes to current systems and processes.</p> <p>Technical guidance and implementation training are available.</p>
Best Suited For	<p>SIDES is best suited for employers and TPAs that typically handle a large volume of UI information requests.</p>



How SIDES Works



The Facts About SIDES E-Response

How It Works	<p>Employers and TPAs receive a request for UI information from the state agency by mail or secure email.</p> <p>Request includes an authorization code to log on to SIDES E-Response and enter the requested information.</p> <p>All information is submitted in an electronic, nationally-standardized format.</p>
What It Requires	<p>Only requires a working internet connection and an employee who will enter the requested UI information.</p> <p>There is no cost to use SIDES E-Response and no programming is required.</p>
Best Suited For	<p>SIDES E-Response is best suited for employers and TPAs with a limited number of UI claims.</p>

How SIDES E-Response Works

SIDES E-Response UI SIDES State Information Data Exchange System

Separation Information Application Response Entry

To respond to your separation information request(s), please login using the instructions provided by the State Agency.

* Indicates a Required Field

[Users Guide](#)

Note: Dashes and/or other punctuation should be omitted from the Federal/State Employer Identification Numbers.

* State: ?

* Federal Employer Identification Number: ?

* State Employer Identification Number: ?

* Identification Number/Access Code: ?

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A Secure Exchange of Information

SIDES E-Response STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Announcement: Welcome to UI SIDES SEW.

Search by SSN (omit Dashes)

Select a Separation Information Request to create a response and/or view/print. Or, select a Separation Information Response to edit, delete or view/print.

Select "Create Response" to begin a response.

Select "Edit Response" to edit information to a response that has not yet been submitted.

Select "Delete Response" to delete a response that has not yet been submitted.

Select "Create Amendment" to change a response that has already been submitted.

Select "Edit Amended Response" to edit information on an amendment in progress.

Select "Delete Amended Response" to delete an amended response that has not yet been submitted.

Note: Requests remain on the SIDES Employer Website for 30 days.

[Users Guide](#)

Separation Information Requests

SSN	Name	Response Status	View/Print
SSN: 000-98-8494	Name: WHEELLOCK, PHILIPPE M	Response Status: Not Started	View/Print
SSN: 007-79-8283	Name: RONGUILLO, OSAMIR	Response Status: Not Started	View/Print
SSN: 684-34-7802	Name: JOHANSON, ALLEN	Response Status: Not Started	View/Print
SSN: 001-29-3253	Name: BRUNTZ, AMANDA	Response Status: Not Started	View/Print

No separation requests found for other PIRs.

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Claimant and Employer Identification

SIDES E-Response
State Information Data Exchange System

Claimant and Employer Identification

Claimant Information

Name: [Text Field]
Date of Birth: [Text Field]
Social Security Number: [Text Field]
Address: [Text Field]

Employer Information

Employer Name: [Text Field]
Address: [Text Field]
Phone Number: [Text Field]

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information

UI Number: [Text Field]
Date of Last Payment: [Text Field]
Date of First Payment: [Text Field]

UI SIDES
State Information Data Exchange System

SIDES E-Response

Benefits of SIDES and SIDES E-Response

- ✓ Saves time and money
- ✓ Available for FREE
- ✓ Safe and secure
- ✓ Reduces paper work
- ✓ Helps keep UI rates as low as possible by reducing overpayments
- ✓ Provides an electronic, nationally standardized data format
- ✓ Includes data checks to ensure exchange of complete and valid information
- ✓ Provides tools for a healthier bottom line
- ✓ Helps reduce overpayment
- ✓ Reduces follow up requests and phone calls

Assessing Which Option to Use

SIDES

- Useful for larger employers with many potential UI claims
- Requires integration between an employer's internal IT systems and SIDES
- Provides an automated data exchange interface between employers and TPAs and state UI agencies

SIDES E-Response

- Useful for employers and TPAs with limited number of UI claims
- Only requires an internet connection and staff to input data

Costs of SIDES E-Response and SIDES

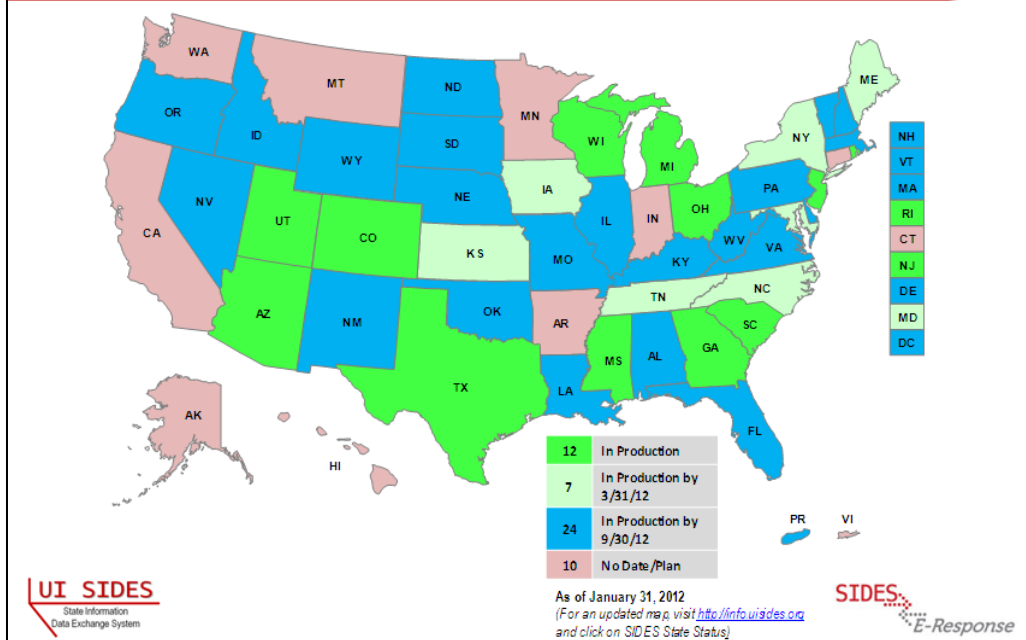
SIDES

- Available free of charge
- Will require changes to internal IT systems to integrate with SIDES
- Internal costs will vary based on existing system design

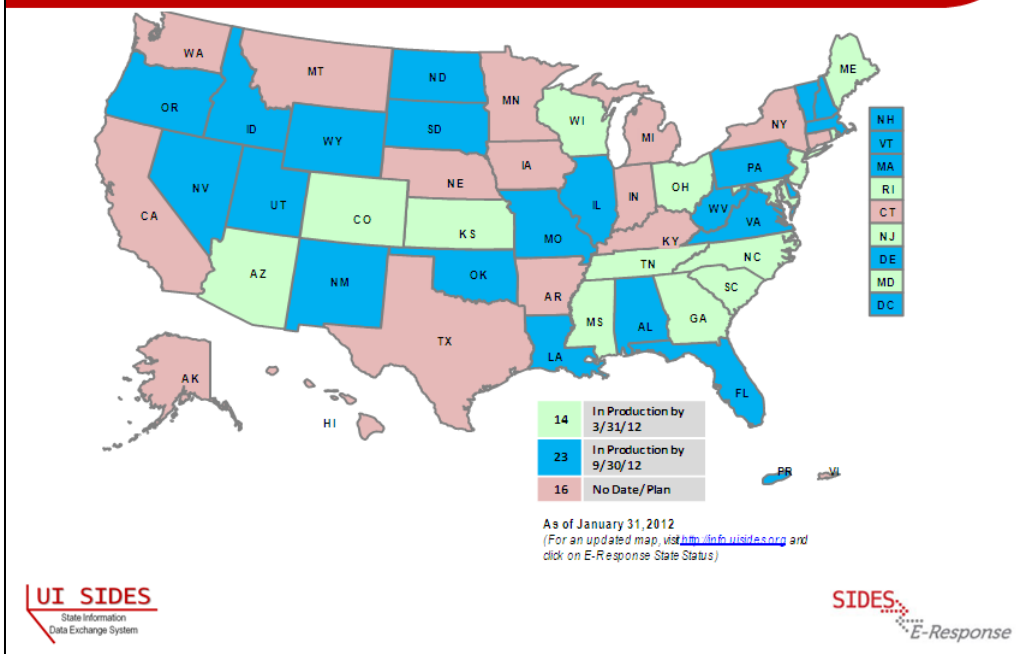
SIDES E-Response

- Available free of charge
- Requires a working internet connection
- Requires an employee to enter the requested information

SIDES States



SIDES E-Response States



Additional Resources

More information is available

- [Insert URL for state UI agency website]
- [Insert name and contact information for a representative within the state UI agency]
- <http://info.uisides.org>

Questions and Discussion

